

Padre Pio Fraternity

Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis Region

Secular Franciscan Order
of Central North Carolina

the little flowers of padre pio fraternity

Volume 13 Issue 15

Padre Pio Fraternity December Retreat

03. Dec Raleigh, NC

We welcome those who would like to learn more about the Secular Franciscans.

Join us for our monthly gatherings on the fourth Sunday of each month, beginning at 2:30 p.m.

Location: Founders Room at St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church, 11401 Leesville Rd., Raleigh, North Carolina.

Community Outreach

Fourth Saturday afternoon | [Oak City Outreach](#)

Food Pantry | [Catholic Parish Outreach](#)

Our Fraternity held its annual December retreat on a rainy Saturday at St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church in Raleigh. The spiritually rich day was lead by our own Joanne Jacovec, OFS with a mass celebrated afterwards by Fr. Hugh Macsherry, OFM.

We began our retreat with prayer and a gift of a folder of multiple beautiful images of St. Francis, St. Clare and of Assisi, Italy for our own personal contemplation throughout the day. Our focus was on “The Life and Spirituality of St. Francis” and “The Life and Spirituality of St. Clare” through contemplation and Visio Divina. We centered ourselves by listening to a beautiful rendition of [“Here I am, Lord”, by Friar Alessandro](#).

Joanne reminded us that “power, prestige and possession” are the opposite values of the three p’s of Franciscan spirituality: “prayer, poverty and peace.” One image in particular seemed to strike us all, the image of the tau in which St. Francis used a bloody figure to draw for St. Clare. “A tau, when Francis returned to San Damiano, he was bleeding... and Clare there was sick as well. He took a bloody finger and he crossed, he made a tau for her.” Joanne explained.

We all gazed at the image as she spoke. Those who have been to San Damiano may recall this image but those of us who have not, were silent and absorbed the holiness of the image. “And to this day, it is still there... all of us that went there know, what its like. That’s still there. Francis is still united with Clare-isn’t that amazing?”, she remarked. A murmur swept across the room.

Joanne encouraged us to visit the North Carolina Museum of Art for personal reflection and contemplation. Located there is a free gallery of “Sacred Artwork” found within the Italian art section which contains many priceless religious icons and images. The following information on pages 2 & 3 is from our retreat resources.–Rachel Bongiorno, OFS



Photo Credit: Rachel Bongiorno, OFS, St. Francis of Assisi, Raleigh, Nc

January 2023

Our Franciscan Family

Secular Franciscans are a community of Catholic men and women in the world who seek to pattern their lives after Christ in the spirit of St. Francis of Assisi. We believe that as human beings and Christians, we have such a vocation that we cannot fulfill alone. In our common response to the Gospel, we work together in community toward communion with all people. Building relationships is our way of life.

For more information, please send an email to ofscentralnc@gmail.com or swinzeler@gmail.com with your name, mailing address and telephone number, and the information you are seeking.

Fraternity Council

Spiritual Assistant:
Fr. Hugh Macsherry, OFM

Minister:
Sharon Winzeler, OFS

Vice Minister:
Dave Shick, OFS

Formation Director:
Charlotte Witosky, OFS

Treasurer:
Zubair Simonson, OFS

Secretary:
Anna Rzewnicki, OFS

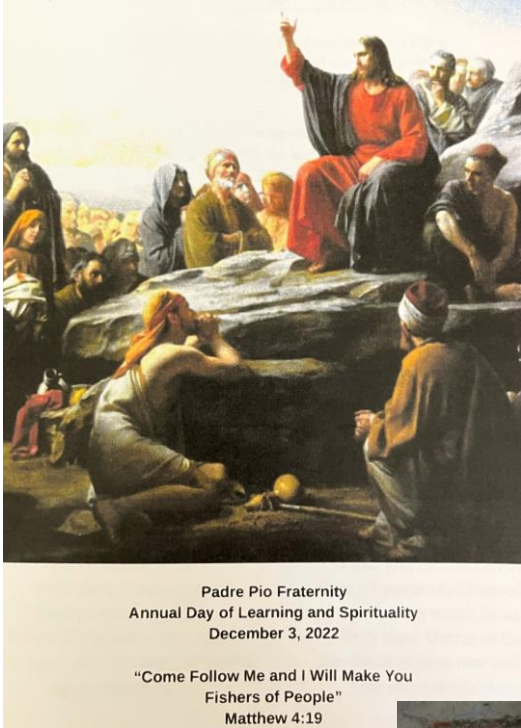
Councilors:
Joan Monti, OFS
Jeanne Casciere, OFS
Chris Peffley, OFS

BSSF Region Minister:
Ellen Ferrone, OFS

Area 3 Councilors:
Lee Cunningham, OFS
Betti Pettinati-Longinotti, OFS

Our website:
<https://ofscentralnc.org/fraternity/>

Facebook:
[Padre Pio Fraternity Secular Franciscan Order of Central North Carolina](#)



Padre Pio Fraternity
Annual Day of Learning and Spirituality
December 3, 2022

"Come Follow Me and I Will Make You
Fishers of People"
Matthew 4:19



Photo Credits: Joanne Jacovec, OFS

ST CLARE : FULL OF FAITH

POPE BENEDICT XVI - GENERAL AUDIENCE

WEDNESDAY, 20TH OCTOBER 2010

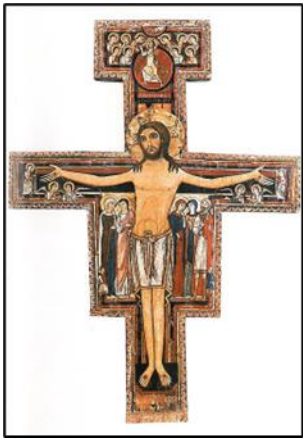
SAINT CLARE OF ASSISI



St Clare's spirituality, the synthesis of the holiness she proposed is summed up in the fourth letter she wrote to St Agnes of Prague. St Clare used an image very widespread in the Middle Ages that dates back to Patristic times: the mirror. And she invited her friend in Prague to reflect herself in that mirror of the perfection of every virtue which is the Lord himself. She wrote:

"Happy, indeed, is the one permitted to share in this sacred banquet so as to be joined with all the feelings of her heart (to Christ) whose beauty all the blessed hosts of the Heavens unceasingly admire, whose affection moves, whose contemplation invigorates, whose generosity fills, whose sweetness replenishes, whose remembrance pleasantly brings light, whose fragrance will revive the dead, and whose glorious vision will bless all the citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem, because the vision of him is the splendour of everlasting glory, the radiance of everlasting light, and a mirror without tarnish. Look into this mirror every day, O Queen, spouse of Jesus Christ, and continually examine your face in it, so that in this way you may adorn yourself completely, inwardly and outwardly.... In this mirror shine blessed poverty, holy humility, and charity beyond words..." [Fourth Letter to Blessed Agnes of Prague, FF, 2901-2903].

Let us Pray



Most High, glorious God
enlighten the darkness of my heart.
Give me true faith, certain hope and perfect charity, sense and knowledge that I may carry out Your Holy and true command.
-Prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi to discern God's will

The Pope's Intentions for January

For Educators

We pray that educators may be credible witnesses, teaching fraternity rather than competition and helping the youngest and most vulnerable above all.

Apostolates

For information please
contact the following
members

JPIC:
Gladys Whitehouse, OFS

The Website:
Sharon Winzeler, OFS

Oak City Cares:
Lee Cunningham, OFS, or
MaryLou Holloway, OFS

CPO & Fraternity
Library:
Maureen Copan, OFS

Hospitality:
Maureen McFadden, OFS
or Alma Hammer, OFS

Prayer Requests:
Deacon Phil Rzewnicki,
OFS

Scrapbook:
Jeanette Cottone, OFS

Sunshine:
Frank Peluso, OFS

The Newsletter:
Rachel Bongiorno, OFS

Visio Divina: Clare of Assisi’s Method of Contemplation

“St. Clare was a partner with St. Francis in the formation of Franciscan Spirituality. In a letter to St. Agnes of Prague, Clare articulated a method of visual prayer. The four fold pattern can be identified as gazing, considering, contemplating, imitating.

Clare’s prayer expresses a deep mutual relationship with God through art. It begins with gazing upon the image, then moves inward to self- identity, identity, and transformation, and finally outward as we reflect God’s face to the world.

Gaze: to fix one’s attention in one place in a relaxed way. Rest your eyes on what you see, and let it still you. Though eyes and thoughts may be drawn elsewhere, bring them back to the image that is the focus of your prayer.

Consider: Involve your mind and your imagination. What is before you? What strikes you in what you see? What do you glimpse of God through it? Do you sense a challenge or a call? Can you give what you are feeling a name?

Contemplate: a mystical seeing, a prayer of silence, of emptying oneself of all but the Spirit of Christ. Rather than being active in your observation or trying to identify new insights, be present to what you have already thought or felt. This is the time of simply being there, present to God as God is present to you.

Imitate: Clare and Francis understood that we encounter the presence of Christ most genuinely when we live God’s truth with our own lives. Praying with art, as with all prayer, moves us toward transformation. We become the one we love.” Source: Joanne Jacovec, OFS, Padre Pio Fraternity Retreat 2022

Contemplation and Visio Divina “Beholding” by Richard Rohr, OFM

“Even in you haven’t had a “Damascus Road” encounter, a regular contemplative practice opens you to non-dual awareness and the necessary actions that flow from this knowing that we are all one in God and that God is in all things. For some, the conversion happens instantaneously, but for most of us, it does require life-long practice:

1. Choose some object-rock, tree, work of art, food, creature-and settle into some time of quiet observation. Whenever judgements, labels, or critiques arise, whether positive or negative, let them go and return to simply witnessing what is before you.
2. Take it all in: shape, texture, colors, sounds, smells, perhaps even taste. If you are distracted by something else or the seemingly random thoughts that perpetually float through your mind, come back to this object, this moment.
3. Gradually let your gaze soften and behold the “more-than-matter-ness” that is also here. Deepen your awareness of God’s presence within this thing and within you.
4. You might return to this object again and again, each time deepening your seeing to the level of pure presence, including and beyond what is visible and sensible.” Source: Joanne Jacovec, OFS, Padre Pio Fraternity Retreat 2022



Fraternity Book Swap
Photo Credit: Rachel Bongiorno, OFS

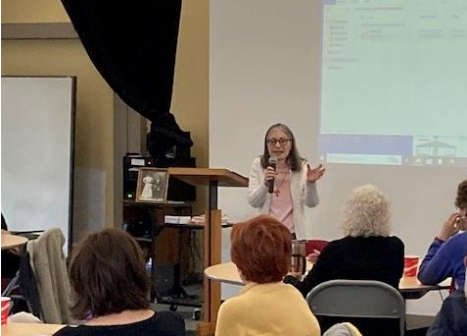


Photo Credit: Dave Shick, OFS



Photo Credit: Rachel Bongiorno, OFS, Giotto, NCMA

Celebrations

*Profession
Anniversaries*

Birthdays

01.03 John Halada, OFS
01.11 Diane Greet, OFS
01.18 Maureen McFadden
01.19 Marylou Holloway, OFS
01.29 Mayra Rangel



L'Epifania, Giotto, c.1320

"Arise, for Thy Light Is Come"

“Now after contemplating the staggering fact that God has become a human child, we turn to look at this mystery from the opposite angle and realize that this seemingly helpless Child is, in fact, the omnipotent God, the King and Ruler of the universe. The feast of Christ's divinity completes the feast of His humanity. It fulfills all our Advent longing for the King ‘who is come with great power and majesty.’ We see that whereas Christmas is the family feast of Christianity, Epiphany is the great ‘world feast of the Catholic Church.’”

Source: catholic.org/the_epiphany

A selection from our Rule of Life:

The rule and life of the Secular Franciscans is this: to observe the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ by following the example of Saint Francis of Assisi, who made Christ the inspiration and the center of his life with God and people . Christ, the gift of the Father's love, is the way to him, the truth into which the Holy Spirit leads us, and the life which he has come to give abundantly . Secular Franciscans should devote themselves especially to careful reading of the gospel, going from gospel to life and life to the gospel. Source: [National Secular Franciscans USA](http://NationalSecularFranciscansUSA)

Pope adds feast of Our Lady of Loreto to Roman Calendar

“The Solemn Proclamation of ‘Maria Regina et Janua Coeli’ took place during Mass at the Basilica of the Holy House, in the Italian city of Loreto. Pope Francis decrees that the feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Loreto shall be observed as an optional memorial on December 10. The decree notes that the Shrine of the Holy House of Loreto, venerated by generations of pilgrims and honored by numerous Popes, ‘recalls the mystery of the Incarnation’, leading all those who visit it to consider ‘the fullness of time’, when God sent his Son, born of a woman, as well as to meditate both on the words of the Angel announcing the Good News and on the words of the Virgin in response to the divine call.’ ”

Source: [Vatican News](http://VaticanNews)

*January Franciscan Calendar
Month of the Holy Name of Jesus and
His Holy Childhood*

01 Feast of the Circumcision of Our Lord
02 Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus
03 Bl. Chriatiane Menaburi
04 Bl. Angela of Foligno
05 Bl. Pierre Bonilli
06 Feast of the Epiphany
07 St. Charles of Sezze
08 Bl. Roger de Toddi
09 Bl. Gilles de Lorenzana
10 Bl. Gregory X, Pope
11 St Thomas of Cori
12 St. Bernard of Corleone
13 Feast of the Baptism of Our Lord Jesus Christ
14 Bl. Oderic de Pordenone
15 Bl. James of Pieve
16 Sts. Berard and Companions
17 Sl. Matthew of Girgenti
18 Bl. Jeanne of Saint Mary
19 Bl. Marcel Spinola y Maestre
20 Bl. Jean-Baptiste Triquerie
21 Bl. Joseph Nascimbeni
22 St. Vincent Pallotti
23 Feast of the Marriage of the Bl. Virgin Mary
24 Bl. Paula Gambarara-Costa
25 Bl. Emmanuel Dominguo y Sol
26 Bl. Georges Matulwicz
27 St. Angela Merici
28 Bl. Bienvenu de Recanati
29 St. Francis de Sales
30 St. Hyacintha de Mariscotti
31 St. John Bosco

[Meditations by Padre Pio](#)

You must speak to Jesus also with the heart, besides with the lips; indeed, in certain cases you must speak to Him only with the heart.



Did you know?



Eye on the Inquirer

Salutations....My name is Judy (Judith Newell). I was born in Ottumwa, Iowa on July 10th. I have been married to my best friend, Ron, for 60 years. During those years, we enjoyed living in Akron and Cleveland OH, Jackson, MI, and Hamilton, New Jersey. We lived in Cincinnati for 29 years where we raised our children, Greg and Kirsten. I worked for 23 of those years for the Health Care Management Group which owned and operated long-term care communities. We moved to Raleigh in 2013 and are blessed to have joined St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church. We are grateful for our 5 grandchildren and 1 great-granddaughter. I love reading, learning, researching, volunteering, and spending time with family and friends. My life has been inspired by the spirituality of Thomas Merton and the Monks at Gethsemane Abbey. I was moved by the spirituality displayed by the Padre Pio Fraternity and their commitment to follow in the footsteps of Christ and St. Francis of Assisi in addition to their commitment to contemplation and action. I am honored to be a current inquirer.

Judy Newell



St. Francis entered the penitential movement in the first decade of the thirteenth century. Many people became penitents. But in 1209, at St. John Lateran in Rome, Pope Innocent III authorized Francis and his followers to live the life of a penitent and preach the Gospel. For the longest time preaching the Gospel was quite important. Today, we predominantly do this through the way we live and our endeavors. Over the years and the Rule of 1221 had many changes - for us seculars it changed and changed - 1238, 1288, 1289, 1689, 1883 and 1978. Pope Leo XIII, in 1883, in an effort to energize the Franciscan movement during his time, wrote a rule that was shorter and less rigorous than the Rule of Nicholas IV. His purpose for a new less rigorous rule was to make it more accessible, and more appealing, to more Catholics.

After reading a spring TAU-USA article of Francine Gikow, OFS, on “Remembrances of the ‘Third Order Secular,’” my thoughts turned back to 1962 and the Order that I was received into. I remembered the beloved friars who formed us under the Rule of 1883, the Leonine Rule. The 1289 Rule, written by Pope Nicholas IV, was in effect for all Third Order Franciscans until Pope Leo XIII radically modified the Rule. He believed that every Catholic would do well to become a Franciscan, and he foresaw vast spiritual growth if they did. His intent in relaxing and changing the 1289 Rule was to make it more livable for masses of people. Indeed, after the Leonine Rule’s proclamation, many did join the Third Order of St. Francis.

In 1952, I was only 19 years old at the time and a U.S. Navy hospital corpsman stationed at the Medical School in Bethesda, Md. Our bacteriology instructor, Lt. Cdr. Elizabeth McCormick, a Third Order Secular, invited several of us to her home in Rockville, MD to say the rosary on Saturdays. My mates in laboratory school were Daryl Hartman and Raul Alonzo. We attended for several weeks and were invited to attend the Third Order Secular meetings at Holy Name College in Washington, D.C.

Third Order Franciscans who attended at the college were also part of the rosary group. The Spiritual assistant, Father Bonaventure Brown OFM, was the one who took care of everything for the group. He and a few other friars led the ongoing formation sessions. We attended Sunday Mass at the Franciscan Monastery located not far from the Catholic University of America and the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. It contained beautiful gardens with replicas of the sacred shrines of the Holy Land.

After Mass, we walked next door to Holy Name College which later moved to Silver Springs, Md. At the college, the nuns prepared breakfast and we would eat with the friars. Afterward, we moved to one of the classrooms, where we received formation from one of the friars. We were thrilled to have Father Steven Hartigan, OFM, give us the sessions each Sunday during Lent. An internationally known, celebrated biblical scholar, his name can still be seen with the Nihil Obstat in many Bibles. Continued next issue... -Frank Peluso, OFS

Franciscans invited to Chapter of Mats in Rome Nov. 14-19, 2024

Have you ever dreamed of celebrating in joy and fraternity with Franciscans from around the world?

The opportunity is coming Nov. 14-19, 2024, in Rome, Italy, with the Chapter of Mats for the Secular Franciscan Order and YouFra.

This will follow the XVII Ordinary General Chapter of the Secular Franciscan Order Nov. 9-14, 2024.

Although the event is nearly two years away, those interested are asked to let their regional ministers know by Jan. 15, 2023. Your indication of interest is non-binding but will help the international council plan for the event.

Participation is not limited to professed members of the OFS. All Secular Franciscans and their families are invited along with spiritual assistants and YouFra members, according to Tibor Kauser, OFS, the CIOFS minister general.

"In the spirit of our Franciscan charism, the Chapter of Mats will be very simple, and intentionally kept at low costs, so that nobody will have difficulties to pay the necessary costs," Tibor said.

OFS families will host many participants in Italy while others will be hosted in convents and retreat houses with simple accommodations. This is to help keep the cost of participation down. Travel will be organized and paid by each participant. There will be a solidarity fund to help those who do need it, but financial resources will be limited, said Tibor.

An estimated 3,000 and 10,000 brothers and sisters are expected to attend.

The Chapter of Mats is intended to strengthen Franciscan spirituality, renew our sense of belonging and contribute to celebrating the Franciscan Centenaries that begin in 2023.

Read Tibor's letter about the Chapter of Mats for more information.

Read more [HERE](#). Source: [SecularFranciscansUSA](#)



Tibor Kauser

Fair Share- A Note from our Treasurer

Happy New Year! For all of us Secular Franciscans, a new year means...it's getting around time for us to pay our fair share. Just as our local fraternities are able to do all of the things that we do because of the generous contributions from members, the regional level of the Secular Franciscan Order is able to do what it does largely because of the Fair Share it receives from the local fraternities. The national level, in turn, is able to operate largely because of the portion of that Fair Share which the regions contribute.

Each professed member and candidate is requested to send \$50 to their local treasurer. The local treasurer sends a large check (the sum of fraternity members times 50) to the regional fraternity.

I've been a treasurer long enough to know that some of you will send me a check a little early, some a little bit late, and also that Fair Share may be a financial strain for some of our members. *If, for any reason, the cost of Fair Share will be a burden, then please don't worry about it!*

The fraternity will cover the cost, regardless. And besides that, your Franciscan heart is worth more to us than any dollar amount. Please hand me your checks at our next meeting, or mail them to:

Zubair Simonson, OFS
6300 Creedmoor Rd Ste 170
Raleigh, NC, 27612



Photo Credit: Rachel Bongiorno, OFS, NCMA



CALLING COUNTER CULTURAL DISCERNMENT RECOMMENDED THE RULE

THE ASSISI SPIRIT OF SIMPLICITY

WHAT IS FRANCISCAN SIMPLICITY?

Franciscan simplicity of life is what some might term as minimalistic – although it's not a trend or current fad or fashion of living. It's more than that. It is a complete way of life that looks at the belongings we own and the ego we are.

To us simplicity involves a life where our belongings, thoughts, time, emotions, relationships, bodies, and finances are not caught-up by today's consumer culture. For us simplicity is a desire to follow the Assisi Spirit of Francis and Clare in their imitation of Our Lord, Jesus Christ. We believe that simplicity is about poverty from possessions we don't need. Poverty of the self helps us to feel more of God's Holy Spirit within us. Franciscan poverty or simplicity encourages us to see with Christ-like eyes and focus on the needs of others. Source: [FranciscanSeculars.com](#)

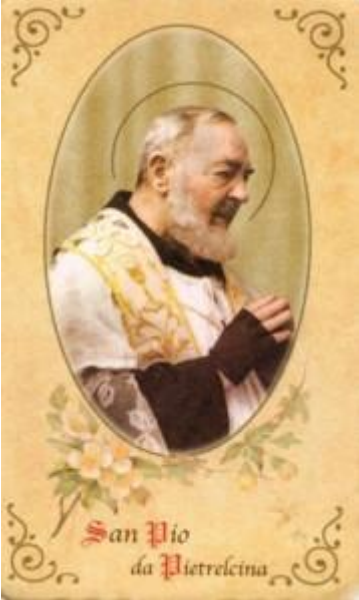
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Feast of the Circumcision of Our Lord	2 Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus	3 John Halada's Birthday	4	5	6 Feast of the Epiphany	7 Epiphany Party
8	9	10	11 Diane Greet's Birthday	12	13 Feast of the Baptism of Our Lord Jesus Christ	14
15	16	17	18 Maureen McFadden's Birthday	19 MaryLou Holloway's Birthday	20	21
22 Gathering	23 Feast of the Marriage of the Bl. Virgin Mary	24	25	26	27	28
29 Mayra Rangel's Birthday	30	31				

Free calendar created by [templatesdirectory.com](#)

Beware of the devil and resist him.

Padre Pio told one of his spiritual daughters: “There are so many [devils] that if each one wanted to assume a body as small as a grain of sand, they would block out the sun.” Yet he insisted that the Christian should have no fear. “You must not marvel if our common enemy has mustered all his strength to keep you from hearing what I’m writing to you,” he explained to one correspondent. “This is his job, and it is to his profit. Therefore, despise him, and arm yourself against him with all the more steadfastness in faith, because it is written, ‘Your adversary, the devil, like a roaring lion, walks about, seeking someone to devour. Resist him strongly in faith.’ Don’t let the many snares of the infernal beast terrify you; Jesus, who is always with you and who fights with you and for you, will never let you be deceived or conquered.”

Excerpt: Padre Pio: The True Story: by C. Bernard Ruffin p.173-174



Source: [Padre Pio Devotions](#)

Each rule provides us with a commitment to spread Christ’s love and example as we encounter the world.

So, relax. Francis has taken care of our New Year’s resolutions from her on out. I suggest that you pick up that little red book and read and meditate on one rule a day throughout the month, at least until Jan. 26. I promise it will affirm what we love most about our order—a path to following the model of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

With 350,000 Secular Franciscans living the Rule, we are making a difference.

The reflections in Formation Fridays that we receive from the national chapter are Rule-centered. For more ways to meditate on the Rule, go to <https://www.dmf-ofs.org/> and click on Dec. 30, 2022.

My thanks to Maureen Copan, OFS, who acquainted me with the daily study of the Rule years ago. –Sharon Winzeler, OFS

Minister’s Memo

New Year’s resolutions come and ago. The goal is to improve our lifestyle and make a difference in society.

Don’t stay up too late New Year’s Eve working on your resolutions. As one of the world’s 350,000 Secular Franciscans, you are already living a resolute life by following the Rule.

Our Rule calls us to continuous improvements (metanoia). Rule 7 tells us “United by their vocation as ‘brothers and sisters of penance,’ and motivated by the dynamic power of the gospel, let them conform their thoughts and deeds to those of Christ by means of that radical interior change which the gospel itself calls ‘conversion.’”

In all humility, resolutions don’t get any better than that.

The rule also calls us to prayer and contemplation (Rule 8), purifying our hearts (Rule 11), serving (Rule 14), promoting justice (Rule 15).

A note from the Editor

Is there anything you would like to share or have featured in our newsletter? Please email me at rchlrbsn@gmail.com -Rachel



Photo Credit: Rachel Bongiorno, OFS, St. Francis of Assisi, Raleigh NC